



# JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20544

THE CHIEF JUSTICE  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
*Presiding*

LEONIDAS RALPH MECHAM  
*Secretary*

April 5, 2005

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on behalf of the Judicial Conference of the United States to seek your help on a matter of the gravest concern and highest priority for the Third Branch – security for federal judges and their families. In light of the brutal murders of United States District Judge Joan Lefkow's family and recent tragic events involving State Court Judge Rowland W. Barnes and court employees in Atlanta, Georgia, the Judicial Conference of the United States approved the enclosed resolution at its March 2005 session. The Judicial Conference believes that attacks such as these strike at the core of our system of government and that steps should be taken as soon as possible to preclude them from happening again in the future.

The Judicial Conference, through its Committee on Security and Facilities, has identified several initiatives to enhance the security of judges that could be undertaken in the near future by the Attorney General, through the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), which has the statutory responsibility to protect the federal judiciary.

- The USMS should join the judiciary to seek immediate funding to provide a comprehensive package of off-site security enhancements, including \$12 million to install a home intrusion detection system for each judge.
- The Department of Justice should seek additional resources for the USMS, as follows: (1) the current complement of three people in the Marshals Service's Office of Protective Intelligence is woefully inadequate and should be increased; (2) a rigorous program of threat investigation by U.S. Marshals should be developed; (3) USMS staffing should be increased to allow deputy U.S. marshals to be present in the courtroom when needed during criminal proceedings; and (4) salaries of deputy U.S. marshals should be commensurate with those of other federal law enforcement agencies to ensure recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals.

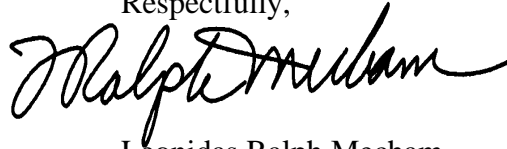
Mr. President

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By law, the judiciary relies on the Department of Justice and the U.S. Marshals Service for its protection. Unfortunately, at the present time federal judges across the country are feeling particularly vulnerable, not only for themselves, but also for their families. Often, when a judge makes a decision in a case, even though it faithfully follows federal law, that judge is subject to harsh, sometimes vicious, criticism. The Judicial Conference wants to ensure that this criticism does not result in physical harm to judges and their families. Toward that end, the Judicial Conference respectfully asks for your leadership and strong support in achieving what I am sure is a common goal, namely the protection of the federal judiciary and its essential role in our society.

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Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph Mecham", written in a cursive style.

Leonidas Ralph Mecham  
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: The Attorney General of the United States